

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: CISCO II FAMILIES VISIT DEPARTMENT

1. MR.LEN CAMPBELL AND MR.AND MRS.WILLIAM HARRELL, PARENTS OF CISCO II, VISITED DEPARTMENT NOVEMBER 3 WHERE THEY MET FOR TWO HOURS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF STATE, DEFENSE AND CISCO. A MEMBER OF CONGRESSMAN REUSS' (D-WISC.) STAFF WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. BOTH FAMILIES INITIALLY EVINced CONCERN FOR WHAT THEY CHARACTERIZED AS AN INSUFFICIENT USG EFFORT FOR THE RELEASE OF THEIR SONS. MR. CAMPBELL EXPRESSED PIQUE OVER USG'S REFUSAL TO IDENTIFY THE GOVERNMENTS RENDERING INTERMEDIARY ASSISTANCE IN THE CASE.

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3. S/CCT GAVE DETAILED RUNDOWN ON THE USG'S EXTENSIVE,

VARIED AND PERSISTENT EFFORTS FOR KAGNEW FOUR'S RELEASE AND, IN MEANTIME, THEIR WELL-BEING. HE EXPLAINED WHY USG, AT THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS' REQUEST AND IN THE CAPTIVES' INTEREST, COULD NOT DIVULGE THE INTERMEDIARY GOVERNMENTS' IDENTITIES.

4. CAMPBELL AND HARRELLS SEEMED INITIALLY INCLINED TO FAVOR RANSOM ROUTE. S/CCT EXPLAINED RATIONALE OF US NO-RANSOM

POLICY, IN ADDITION TO FACT THAT NO SPECIFIC, AUTHORITATIVE RANSOM DEMANDS HAD BEEN RECEIVED. BY END OF MEETING THE HARRELLS AND CAMPBELL EVIDENCED BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF AND GREATER SATISFACTION WITH THE USG'S EFFORTS ON THEIR SONS' BEHALF. CAMPBELL, HOWEVER, LEFT DOOR OPEN TO POSSIBILITY OF HIS GOING TO AFRICA TO TRY TO CONVINCE ELF/PLF TO RELEASE CISCO II, LARGELY ON GROUNDS OF THEIR SYMPATHY WITH ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE GOALS EVEN IF NOT WITH ELF/PLF METHODS. HE ALSO VAGUELY DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF SECURING WORLD AIRWAYS' COOPERATION IN FLYING HUMANITARIAN AID TO ERITREAN REFUGEES IN THE SUDAN AS QUID PRO FOR RELEASE OF CISCO II AND KAGNEW II.

5. CAMPBELL SUGGESTED USG COULD MAKE BETTER USE OF JOURNALISTS SUCH AS GWYNN ROBERTS AND HAMAD ABU ZAIDA. WE NOTED ROBERTS HAD BEEN FULLY DEBRIEFED BY USG, HAD BEEN AFFORDED FACILITIES TO TELEPHONE FAMILIES, AND HAS ASSISTED IN TRANSMISSION OF PACKAGES AND MAIL TO CAPTIVES. CAMPBELL MAINTAINED MORE COULD HAVE BEEN DONE WITH ZAIDA. WE PROMISED TO CHECK ON THIS POSSIBILITY.

6. FOR BEIRUT: REQUEST EMBASSY ENDEAVOR ASCERTAIN IF ZAIDA IS IN POSITION TO CONTACT CISCO II AGAIN AND PERHAPS SERVE AS CONDUIT FOR MESSAGES AND PACKAGES. KISSINGER

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